

REMARKS

This paper is responsive to the Office Action mailed September 15, 2006. Claims 39-52 are currently pending in the above-identified application. Claims 39, 41, 43 and 50 have been amended. Support for all amended claims can be found in the specification, and no new matter has been added by these amendments. Reconsideration of the claims in view of the amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Examiner Interview

Applicants thank the Examiner for his time on February 13, 2007 to discuss the proposed claim amendments and clarification of certain differences between the proposed claims and the cited prior art reference.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claim 41 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Specifically, the Office Action states that the limitation "permitting registration of the log data" is unclear.

Applicants have amended claim 41 to read "registering the log data." Thus, the subject matter of claim 41 is clarified. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 41 under 35 U.S.C. §112 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 39-52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a/e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,956,404 issued to *Schneier*. While Applicants regard the claims to be patentable over *Schneier*, Applicants herein amend claims 39, 43 and 50 to further clarify certain differences between the present invention and the cited reference, and to expedite prosecution of the present case. Without conceding the merits of the rejection, Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claims overcome this rejection.

Claim 39, as amended, recites in part "providing a log list comprising previously generated digital signatures; computing a hash value of inputted data including a message to be signed or a hash value thereof, the inputted data further including only the most recently generated digital signature obtained from the log list or a hash value thereof; [and] encoding the computed hash value of the inputted data to produce encoded data of a predetermined format that is suitable for encryption processing for generating a signature."

In contrast, *Schneier* teaches a signature generation method that uses past signature information. A chain of all past signatures is maintained by tracing every signature to get its prior signature. (Column 7, lines 7-9 and lines 20-28).

Neither *Schneier* nor any of the other cited references, alone or in combination, teach all of the features recited in independent claim 39. Specifically, *Schneier* does not teach "computing a hash value of inputted data including a message to be signed or a hash value thereof, the inputted data further including only the most recently generated digital signature obtained from the log list or a hash value thereof." For at least this reason, claim 39 is allowable over the cited art, as are claims 40-42, which depend from claim 39.

Independent claims 43 and 50, as amended, recite features that are similar to the features recited in amended claim 39. As discussed above with reference to claim 39, the cited art does not teach these features. Thus, claims 43 and 50 are also allowable over the cited art for at least the same reasons. Claims 44-49 depend from allowable claim 43 and derive patentability therefrom. Furthermore, claims 51 and 52 depend from allowable claim 50 and are patentable for at least the same reasons.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 39-52 under 35 U.S.C. §102 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

Application No. 09/693,713
KUNIHICO MIYAZAKI *et al.*
Reply to Office Action of September 15, 2006

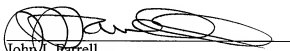
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If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 206-467-9600.

Respectfully submitted,

2/15/07

Date



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